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MY LITTLE FRIENDS

Original stories in German



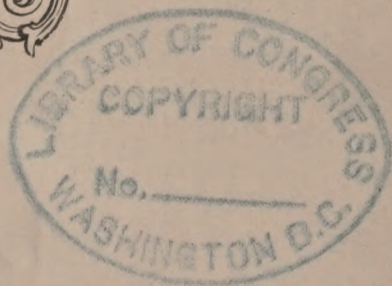
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SOMETHING NEW

FOR

MY LITTLE FRIENDS.

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Original Stories in Verse.



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PHILADELPHIA:

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1866.

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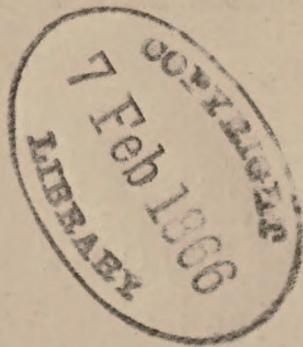
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P R E F A C E.

The Author would not wish to assume the stern office of Mentor, but claims, instead, that warm sympathy for children entitles her to publish these little stories with loving confidence.

The Author yielded to the impulse to put in simple form truths clear to her own mind, and the following stories were the result.

Several little friends, for whose pleasure they were intended, listened with an interest that led the writer to think other children might like them also.

F. F.

PHILADELPHIA.

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SOMETHING NEW

FOR

MY LITTLE FRIENDS.

THE SELFISH GIRL.

HER skin was so fair, and her brown hair in
curls,

Her mouth was so small, while her teeth were like
pearls;

Her plump little form was so modelled by grace,
To match all the charms of her beautiful face,
People said she was lovely; but near friends, I
own,

Could not speak in her praise with a confident
tone.

For what was the value of figure or face,
When selfishness dimmed half the light of their
grace?

Why mark the rare bloom of her beautiful skin,
When temper was reigning triumphant within?

She never would share with a playmate or friend,
A cake or an apple. She always would spend
On herself all the money her mother might give,
Yet all favors from others would silent receive.
She took them as one but enjoying a right,—
Such selfishness made her a very sad sight.

Then, if she was crossed—if her mother would say,
“My darling can’t go in the carriage to-day,
She will play at the door like a good little girl!”
I declare you’d forget that her hair was in curl,
And her face once so pretty. A strange, ugly
frown,
As black as a thunder-cloud, slowly dropped down.
It began very high, near the roots of her hair,
And it spread o’er her face till no beauty was
there.

If some little visitor, spending the day,
Was sent to the nursery where all her toys lay,
She always would rule, and she never would yield,
Like an obstinate general alone in the field;
And whatever the rest might desire to play,
She managed to choose out the opposite way.

If another one wanted the dolls to go out,
She would keep them all in,—not a shadow of
doubt!

If a visitor hinted, "Let's put one to bed,
And pretend she is ill with a pain in her head,
And the doctor must come,"—she would say, "No,
I shan't!

She shall go on a visit straight off to her aunt;
And you be the aunt,—you must do as I say,—
I know how to pick out the prettiest play!"

Do you think she was happy? That never could be!
God gives a great power to you and to me
To make others happy,—the only true way
To make our own lives like a sunshiny day.

This poor little girl could not see it at all;
Though her eyes were so large, yet her heart was
so small,

It seemed this plain truth she was never to know,
That would kindle her life in a generous glow,
And make her so happy, so loving, and true,
That a mean, selfish action she never could do.

She lived for herself. But a child, you may say,
The love of her kind friends can never repay.
Her hands are so weak, and her power is so small:
She can speak out her thanks, and you say that
is all.

Dear little one! God is now saying to you,
For each and for all there is something to do.

Kind words, or a kiss, when a playmate would
cry;

Kind looks, or an alms, if a beggar goes by;
The thought for another that keeps your tongue
still,

Though anger may wrestle as hard as it will;
The candor that speaks when some mischief is
done,

Which your mother might blame on an innocent
one;

The favorite play given up when you see
The rest on some other game fain would agree;
These things make you happy! Grand houses
and toys

Will never give to you one hint of such joys!

These are trifles, you say! Ah, from heaven
above,

The angels look down, and the children they love
Are those who are doing these same little things;
Then the angels say, waving their radiant wings,
“Now God is well pleased, for the beautiful prayer
Of the little ones’ lives rises sweet on the air.

They have found in their hearts the acceptable
way

Their Heavenly Father would have them to pray.”

THE BOYS AND THE SQUIRRELS.

TWO little squirrels sat up in a tree,
Cracking their nuts, just as gay as could be;
With tails curled behind them, and fur bright and
soft,
It really did seem as they swayed there aloft,
They were waiting with hope in the sunlight that
day,
A photographer surely might wander that way—
And taking their likeness, make squirreldom stare
At the two pretty creatures thus photographed
there.

Two sturdy boys sat just under the tree,
Each resting a terrible gun on his knee.
All around them so lovely, so smiling, and gay,
It would seem that a cruel thought never could
stay
To darken the landscape our Father made fair,
That His children in peace and in love might dwell
there.

Down dropped a large nut;—by unluckiest chance
The boys, looking upwards, in merriest dance
Saw both the young squirrels—unconscious and
free,

As they ran on the boughs of the friendly old
tree.

“Hurrah!” cried the eldest,—“I’ll soon make one
fall!

They’ve had frisking enough—here’s an end to it
all!”

He pointed the gun. Hark! a terrible sound,
And one poor little squirrel lies dead on the ground.

Its lithe little body all bleeding and torn,
It never will run in the freshness of morn,
To gather the nuts from its favorite tree.
No more in the sunlight the squirrel you’ll see,
Perched on some high bough, with his bright little
eyes,

That seemed on the watch ’gainst a sudden surprise.
He lies on the ground stiff and silent instead—
The poor little innocent squirrel is dead!

THE CAT AND HER KITTEN.

THERE once lived a Cat in a beautiful house;
She never would stoop to run after a mouse,
But lay in a room on a cushion so fine,
When the rest of the family came in to dine.
She had four legs, which surely were better than
two—

So she waited her share, and had nothing to do.
She secretly thought it a favor most rare,
That she with such graces should deign to live there!

She once was a beauty, and light on her toes,
And still took great pride in the shape of her nose;
It was long as aristocrat's always should be;
Then her eyes were half-closed so she scarcely could
see,

In a languid indifference to persons and things,
While she scorned, from youth upwards, to run after
strings.

She dined in her age off a nice China plate,
Then took a long nap by the side of the grate.

You think she was shielded from sorrow and care;
Alas! her sad mind held its secret despair;
For she had one young Kitten—a troublesome
thing—

That delighted to jump at a spool or a string

With no thought for appearances—full of its fun—
And charmed above all things to take a good run!

In vain with large tears running over her face,
The Mother would point to the quieter grace,
That lay hid in her own far more beautiful form;
Decorum would never permit her to storm,
But she lectured the Kitten; it thought it good
fun,

And remembered to take an additional run
When its Mother was napping beside the warm
grate,
In a graceful position becoming such state.

Though the Mother was grieved, she was safe in
one thing;

If the Kitten would run at a ball or a string,
In one point at least, though all others might fail,
She would have her own way. The young Cat had
a tail

That was long and as glossy as Kitten's could be;
All the children delighted its beauty to see.

The Mother-Cat said, (for the Kitten was vain
Of her beautiful tail, though I tell it with pain,)
“My love! one great lesson more solemn than all!
Never play with your tail! If you do it will fall,
And leave me despairing;—It never will grow!
Now heed what I'm saying—the habit is low.

If the little plebeians will chase in that way,
They're not in my keeping; I've nothing to say!"

The Kitten remembered the terrible fate,
Foretold by its Mother that dozed near the grate,
And never forgot, in its frisking and fun,
The amusement was dangerous, and couldn't be
done.

Alas for instruction! The Mother one day
Said, "Kitten! I've something important to say.
I yesterday met with an old friend of mine,
That was so glad to see me she asked me to
dine.

She invited you, too—having young cats, you
know;"

The Kitten replied it would like much to go.

They started, and soon reached a sunshiny yard
That seemed made for kittens. The gravel was
hard

And the grass long and wavy; four young cats
were there,

Sent out by their mother to breathe the fresh air.

The old ones adjourned to a summer-house near,
To talk of old times, and the coast was left clear
For the young cats that ran through the tall, waving
grass,

And both mothers looked out when they happened
to pass.

But the grand one stops chatting, and gives a low
cry,

Then says, with a groan and a tear in her eye:

“I told it to never run after its tail!”

Here she sank back despairing, and gave a low wail.

Then the other one looked, and beheld the young
cat,

While around it the other approving ones sat,
In a joy that had made its poor mother turn pale,
Running 'round with great gusto, and chasing its
tail,

In an ecstasy words only feebly can tell;

While the rest cried, “Improving,” and one “Very
well!”

The hostess said, touching her visitor's side,
As she leaned near a window and piteously cried,
“Now, don't be disheartened! This never will do.
My friend, I must whisper a few words to you.

“Improve it, and teach it as much as you can;
The Kitten is one in Dame Nature's great plan;
If you thwart her too much you will certainly fail;
A kitten was made to run after its tail!”

ANGRY WORDS.

IN a very large garden, one sunshiny day,
A little boy ran at his work or his play;
It is hard to say which, for the gardener there too,
Directed the little boy just what to do;
And he ran to one bed, stooped and pulled up the
weeds,
In his tiny wheelbarrow he carried the seeds
That were wrapt in brown papers, then worked
with his spade,
And you couldn't believe what a racket he made
The whole of the time; and he worked like a
horse;
So the gardener was very much aided, of course.

But he heard a low ring, which he knew very well,
In a pause of his work, and he ran quick to tell
To his father how much of the labor was done:
He would kiss him, and call him his dear little son.
And they met in the entry, but what a grave face,
As the little boy stopped all aglow from his race.
He kissed him in silence, then gently he said,
“My son, little Harry, your cousin, is dead!”
And the boy, with a low, and most desolate sound,
Rushed into the garden and fell on the ground,

In an anguish his young heart felt never before;
And he sobbed on the grass by the side of the
door,—

“No, no! it can’t be that he really is dead,
When I longed so to see him!” the little boy
said.

“O, Harry! dear Harry! come back to my side.”
But no little cousin in kindness replied;
And refusing all comfort, he wept, but in vain,
For the friend that would ne’er run to meet him
again.

Shall I tell you what caused him that terrible cry;
When he seemed broken-hearted, and could not
reply?

The two little cousins—the day was so bright—
Were out in the garden, each flying his kite,
And just as intent on the length of his string,
As if all the wealth of the world it would bring.
Tied on to the tail of each frail paper kite,
That shone just like silver—they glistened so
bright—

And both were as pleasant as boys could well be,
As they ran through the walks with great shout-
ing and glee.

Now Harry,—he didn’t know how it was done,—
But heedless with racing, and dazzled with sun,

Ran straight into Howard, and snap went the string;

And away flew one kite like a bird on the wing!
Mirth flew away with it,—a loud storm of wrath
Startled two little birds hopping round on the path.

“I hate you! you did it on purpose!” he said.

“O, Howard! I didn’t! Here, take mine instead,”
Said the little boy, rising, all covered with dust.

“You really won’t have it? oh, take it! you must!”

But Howard rushed in and quick bolted the door,
And his dear little cousin he never saw more.

He felt most unhappy the rest of the day,
And was sobered and sorry. He tried hard to play,
But a dull, heavy burden lay deep in his mind,
And no pleasure in books nor in games could he find.

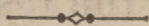
Then he said, “I was such a weak, passionate fool,
And I’ll say so to-morrow, the first thing at school.
I feel just as sorry as sorry can be;”
But the thought of his vow made his spirit more free.

In the morning he looked for his friend to come in,—

He was always so punctual,—but lessons begin,

And no cousin is there. Then he says, very low
"I'm more sorry than ever, to-morrow I'll go,
When half holiday comes, that is just what I'll do,
Straight off to their house, and I'll say what is
true,
That I feel so ashamed. He'll forgive and forget,
Though I can't for a month, my ridiculous pet!"

Ah, a terrible fever had laid its fierce hand
On the cousin he wronged. Nevermore will he
stand
In the class at his side. He's with angels instead,
And they whisper it, sobbing, "Dear Harry is
dead!"



LADY JANE.

A CHILD sat with an open book,
As still as any mouse;
Then suddenly one leap she took,
That fairly shook the house;

And darting where the children sat
Amidst their blocks in play;
She called aloud, "Enough of that!
Quick! put your things away."

"I mean to act you Lady Jane;
The queen cut off her head
Because, poor thing, she tried to reign,
The youthful actress said.

"Sit on the sofa. Now, you see,
These tables make the stage;
One must the executioner be,
In quite a wicked rage.

"And one,—dear me! but that will do,—
I really am the chief;
It takes but one to act it through;
The rest can do the grief.

"My hands you see crossed on my breast;
This towel is my veil;
My eyes are red, my heart's opprest,
My cheeks are thin and pale."

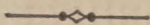
A rosy child she climbed the stage,
Her face composed to grief,
The rest, in awe of learned age,
Content she should be chief.

"There, stand away; the play begins;
And don't make any noise.
At first, I think of all my sins;
Now do be quiet, boys!"

With whispered words, in hollow tone,
She walked the tables wide,
Then turned, with many a lengthened groan,
And swayed from side to side.

With half-shut eyes, a sudden lurch
She gave, and then in vain
Both hands flew out, as in a search,
Her balance to regain.

Too near the edge, away she flew;
Alas, for queenly pride!
The younger children never knew
How Lady Jane Grey died.



GONE TO HEAVEN.

“LET in the light,” a woman spoke,
And through the room warm sunshine
broke
And played upon the wall.
A spring-bird hopped across the sill,
And, as it passed, the piping shrill
Startled the ears of all.

The country orchards whiten fast,
And leaves a tempting shadow cast;
But Winter lingers here,

No tree has spread its fresh'ning leaves
Above the garret's dreary eaves;
Can Summer be so near?

A room, dim, narrow, that the eye
Turns wistful towards the clear blue sky
That overhangs us all;
So mean that life seems wasted—dead;
So high, the city's ceaseless tread
Sounds like a muffled call.

A low half-sob upon the air,
A rustle on the creaking stair,
Tell plainly, "Death is here!"
And with the sunlight on its head,
A smile around her lips, is laid
A child held close and dear.

No roses on the simple shroud;
No requiem o'er a grieving crowd;
No solemn state nor pall.
A mother stands beside the bed,
An anguish in her voice and tread,
That awes the hearts of all.

No beauty on that care-worn face,
Save that a pitying eye may trace
The mother's look still there.

Her fingers clasp that dimpled hand,
As if she strove to understand
And meet her strange despair.

No other child!—her cherished—last;
The Present merges in the Past,
And Life and Thought stand still.
If seems a merry laugh must come
From smiling lips that still are dumb,
And never more will thrill.

The needle that in solemn jest
Had toiled—the plaything—all the rest
That childhood hoards with care;
The little dress in frolic torn,
And shoes with many a climbing worn,
All lay unheeded there.

Lét in the light on sorrowing hearts!
The light of Day in clouds departs,
But pitying angels wait;
And from God's Heaven great, countless stars
Shine down on dreary prison bars,
As on the palace gate!

A RUN ON THE BEACH.

THREE happy children they ran on the sands,
Shouting, all flushed with the sunshine and
glee;

Dropping the shells through their little wet hands—
Madcaps let loose like the waves of the sea.

“Skipping these pebbles is very fine fun,
As they dance over the breakers out there,
And for a race you may book me for one,
Out of two runners who try to start fair.

“But, little Mary, you take your last throw,
Then we will rest by those rocks near the beach.
We are great boys—you are younger, you know—
Now let us see who the farthest can reach!”

Loud laughed the child as her stone sped away;
“Edgar! oh, Edgar! mine flew out alone!
Yours, I saw it, it stopped by the way;
Mine’s the best racer—my wonderful stone.

“Harry, look out there; I wish it were here;
I’d take it to Mamma and throw it again.
I wish she’d been with us and standing right near;
I’m sure there’s none like it on beach or in lane!”

Resting they sat, where the rocks bare and gray,
Towered a frowning old castle above;
Sunshine gleamed in when such dwellers as they
Lit the dark cliffs with their freshness and love.

“Look, little cousin,” this beautiful shell
Streaked pink and white, and so shining, you see,
Finished so daintily thro’ its deep cell:
I found it an hour ago; whose shall it be?

“For you, or for Harry? I really can’t say
To which I will give it; so what shall I do?
Good! I have hit on an excellent way;
Then I can judge ’twixt our Harry and you!

“Harry is older, so he shall begin.
Each of you tell me some story you’ve heard.
You needn’t be frightened if sea-birds look in;
They’re excellent listeners, and can’t tell a word.

“Come, now, begin! I am ready to hear;
Captain, lead off; you’ve a plentiful stock.
Speak rather loud; for old Neptune stands near,
Striking his trident down deep in the rock.”

“What shall I tell? Here is one that I read,
With my old Grammar still staring at me.
The lessons go galloping out of my head,—
The tales stay forever, though why, I don’t see!”

HARRY'S STORY.

CHILDREN two they dwelt together,
Where Italian sunlight shone.
Pining not for English heather,
Where their Mother's thoughts had flown.

One was pale—the roses never
Tinged her cheeks with crimson dyes;
But the blue of the far river
Was not deeper than her eyes.

Older was the boy, and stronger,
That another claimed his care;
And while strangers hoped no longer,
Quick to plan, and brave to dare;

Curious things from rock and river,
Leaves where wondrous insects wrought,
Shining stones that gleam forever,
To that sister pale he brought.

Hopeful in the love that quickened
Her slow feet to swifter pace,
Though the Mother's heart turned, sickened,
From the brightness in her face.

Fading still, her little fingers
Nerveless clasp the flower he brings;
Soon will eyes whose light still lingers,
Open on celestial things!

“Mother! once they whispered near me,
‘Very soon the child will die!’

It was dark, they did not hear me;
Mother, dearest, do not cry!

“Then a strange, cold, fear came o’er me,
And I said, ‘I cannot go!’
God is good, and all before me
Seems to speak and answer no!

“Quick I came to clasp you tighter,
Feeling safe while you were near;
Now my heart is calm and brighter,
For a dream which you shall hear.

“In the night-time I seemed lying
In our room, but all alone;
And I felt that I was dying;
How I longed to catch your tone!

“Twice I said, ‘Oh, come, dear Mother!
Take my hand and hold me fast;’
Then I tried to call you, Brother,
While my fluttering breath might last.

“As I called, some one stood near me,
Bending down, he gently smiled,
Saying, ‘Daughter, do not fear me;
Come with me, beloved child.’

“It was dark, but through the shadows
I could see him, fair and tall,
Just as plain as if bright meadows
Threw their sunshine on the wall.

“And I knew him then, dear Mother,
By the picture that you kiss,
As he said, ‘God’s hand, no other,
Leads through Death to Life like this!’

“Then he told of lands so shining,
That I clasped him by the hand,
With a new and eager pining,
Towards that far-off, glorious land;

“And he said, ‘The Heavenly morrow
Dawns, dear child, for such as thee;
And no sickness, pain, nor sorrow,
In that radiant home will be!’

“Long he held me, in his keeping
I felt safe as if you came
By the bed where I was sleeping;
And your faces grew the same.

“Soon the brightness of the morning
Broke upon me where I lay,
And I felt to you returning,
I would be content to stay;

“Then that voice spoke: ‘Little daughter,
Whom I came last night to kiss,
Safe across the troubled water,
God will lead to higher bliss.

“‘But a little while before them,
Mother, Brother, soon will come;
Heaven is always stretching o’er them
Darling! enter first their home!’”

Soon the little hands were folded;
Soon the little form was chill;
But a life for Heaven was moulded,
And the Mother’s grief was still.

“Oh, Edgar! indeed, I have nothing like that!
I felt just like crying—he made it so true.
Now, mine, I’m afraid, will sound stupid and flat,
It’s not very pretty, and not very new.

“I studied it over for Mamma one day;
She says that my needle lies hid in its case;
I told her I really had something to say,
And handed my book with a mark at the place.”

MARY'S STORY.

A LITTLE Ant by oddest chance,
Was very often lazy,
And in the sunlight loved to dance;
Folks thought her really crazy.

They held a meeting on the case,
These ants so old and clever;
She, careless of her deep disgrace,
Grew lazier still than ever.

Her Mother went, with anxious mind,
To see an Owl so hoary,
And while he blinked, with eyes half blind,
She told her woful story.

"O, nonsense," said the list'ning judge,
"I'll hear complaints no longer;
She's very wise; such talk is fudge;
Play makes the sinews stronger.

"Soon such a heavy load she'll bring,
You'll triumph in her labor,
And say, amidst the swarming ring,
'Look there, my carping neighbor.'"

This comfort in her troubled heart,
The Mother went along:
At length one day,—a weary part,—
No more a worker strong—

She tried to lift a heavy load,
The effort laid her flat;
When sprang the young one on the road,
“Ho, ho! a trifle that.”

She whisked it in the narrow door,
And soon returned to say,
“I never had such fun before;
I’d like to work all day!”

“Well, well, old Mr. Owl was right,”
The gazing Mother said;
“He blinked, but saw a wondrous sight;
I’ll take a rest in bed.”

* * * * *

Edgar glanced up with a quizzical look,
“Better draw lots with this sea-weed,” he said,
“I never read better ones out of a book;
All *choosing* is driven clean out of my head.”

THE BOY AND HIS PRIZE.

IT was summer-time: all through that beautiful
wood

The birds seemed to know that the Giver was good,
And poured forth their matins in musical notes,
That gushed fresh and clear from their delicate
throats.

And the trees, how they waved in the sunlight that
day,

As, stepping so briskly across the cleared way,
A bright-looking boy, with his books and his slate,
Too eager to look, and too hurried to wait,
Passed through to the clearing, and in the school
door,

While we turn to the beautiful woodland once
more.

Along the same path soon another boy came;
And he said as he went, "It's a terrible shame
That I should be cheated so out of my prize
By one that's no bigger,—a boy just my size,—
And a new one at that. Now, why couldn't he
stay

Till this prize had been given clear out of the way.
I am sure he will gain it; the fellow's no fool!
Till he came I stood highest of all in the school."

He muttered these words to himself as he went,
And just at that moment he suddenly bent
To pick up a paper that lay on the grass,
As if quietly waiting for some one to pass.
He opened and read it; an ominous frown
Looked as dark as the smoke hanging over the
town;

Then a flush came across it, and quickly he said,
"This can stay for a while in my pocket instead."

The boys were assembled; the master came in,
With a kindly expression, but wearied and thin,
And said to the younger ones, deep in their fun,
"Well, boys, for a while this dull schooling is
done;

But you won't forget all, when you run off so fast;
Keep spelling, at least till the summer has passed."
Then he went to his desk; the few lessons were
said;

And the master cried, putting one hand to his head,
"And now for the prize in my favorite class;
Don't all of you claim it, I beg you, *en masse*."

From its brown paper cover the schoolmaster drew
A red and gilt book, and exposed it to view
On the front of his table; and two little boys
Rose hastily, making a very great noise,
And as hastily sat when the master looked down,
Though his face could not possibly muster a frown.

“James Hill, take your place; you had better stand near;
And speak rather loud, that your schoolmates may hear.”

The boy turned to his desk, and he opened a book,

Which he turned, and then lifted, and carefully shook;

And a keen disappointment swept over his face

As he glanced, but in vain, round the whole narrow space.

“I have lost it,” he said, in a tone of despair;

“I had it, but now it no longer is there.

I walked to the town with my books, and it dropped,

I suppose.” Then the tears came,—he suddenly stopped.

“Well, well,” said the master, I’ll break my own rule;

I give half an hour to go from the school

And get the rough copy. Vacation’s so nigh,

We will pass your strange carelessness quietly by.”

“But I tore up that copy,” the boy slowly said;

“I must try for a prize the next season instead.”

The essays were carefully read by the rest,

And one was held up and decided the best.

"John Roberts, you've gained it, and fairly, we know.

Now, boys, we will have a brief chat ere you go."

There John sat with the prize he had purchased so dear;

The words of his master still rang in his ear.

And he picked up the book; then he glanced at the name,

And felt on both cheeks the sharp tingling of shame.

It was "Honor: A Story for Boys," so it read;

Ah, that scene in the woodland came into his head!

He crushed deep in his pocket the sign of his sin,
With the name of its owner traced clearly within;
And he felt a dull weight where he once felt so free,

As he said, "There was none who could possibly see."

Then he wondered he could not rejoice as he ought,

When the beautiful prize, he so eagerly sought,

Was safe in his hand, and no person could say,

"Where is the lost essay you picked up to-day?"

Ah! but Conscience spoke loud; so you readily see,

He felt wretched and mean as a boy could well be.

LILY.

TENDER and fair, with a voice low and sweet,
Reared though she was in a small, narrow street,
Where sunshine came only to glance in the pane,
And vanish away from the squalor again.

Where men with coarse faces, so haggard and bent,
Lived down to the level of stolid content;
Where Ignorance reigned, and their voices in
prayer,
Rose faint, if at all, on the desolate air!

Where many slept hungry, and little ones cried
For the bread their poor Mother in kindness denied,
That noontide might bring them a morsel of food;
There lived she, where Life seemed so barren and
rude.

A little one strangely dropped out of God's fold,
That so the dim eyes of the evil and bold
Might catch a faint vision of innocent grace,
As they turned for a moment to look on her face.

THE BOY AND HIS SLED.

“**I** DECLARE, this is shameful!—it’s always the way!

Just when I expected a clear, frosty day,
To go with the boys, and have fun on my sled,
This horrible rain is now pouring instead!”

It was such a bright room where the little boy stood,
And the meal on the table looked smoking and
good.

There were muffins, with butter as yellow as gold,
While the steam from the coffee-urn lazily rolled,
As his Mother sat waiting; and such a nice smell
Seemed to hint that inside all was going on well!
Then the maid, with white apron, brought in the
hot meat;

Still the boy stood, and sullenly looked down the
street.

“I’ve a story to tell you, my dear little son;
Come here to my side—it’s a very short one,”
Said his Father, who sat with the news in his hand;
“It is one that I trust we may all understand.

“As I went to my office, wrapt up close and warm,
To face the keen blast of the pitiless storm,

I yesterday passed by a mean, little street;
It blew so, I hardly could stand on my feet;
My umbrella was twisted almost inside out,
And I couldn't help wishing myself just as stout
As a man who ran by, in a warm, ruddy glow,
With such seeming delight, through the sleet and
the snow.

“ ‘Will you give me some money?’ a trembling
voice said.

I looked down at the pale little speaker instead;
He was poor as could be, that was certainly true—
As he raised his brown eyes, I thought, Harry, of
you.

“ ‘Indeed, I'm no beggar, but Katy's so cold!
The room that we live in is dismal and old;
And, last night, as I lifted her into the bed,
The thought of an ice-house came into my head.
This morning we really had nothing to eat,
And I said, I don't care! I'll go beg in the street!’
Here I took the boy's hand, and said, ‘Show me
the way;
Little Katy shall have a good breakfast to-day!’

“As up the dark stairs, hand-in-hand we both went,
I thought, little son, of my slight discontent
With a feeling of shame, as I looked at my guide:
Such a frail little fellow, to keep by my side!

Then he opened a door; it was cold, as he said;
In a corner there lay on a mean, narrow bed,
A Mother, who turned on her pillow, and smiled
As she met that new hope in the face of her child.
By her side sat a little one, blue with the cold,
But her figure was rounded, her hair shone like
gold.

“In the room were some chairs, and a very small
cot,
And a few dingy books; but I saw there was not
In that whole dreary chamber a morsel to eat,
As the child, with his trembling voice, told in the
street.

And, I said, ‘Let us go, without further delay,—
It is hard to be hungry this bitter cold day!’

“So we went to a cook-shop,—I carried the bread,
And in just twenty minutes those children were
fed;

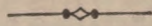
While I brought up a man with an armful of wood,
And young Katy was warmed, and declared it was
good!

“Then the Mother so wonderingly looked in my
face;

Such a frail little hand on the coverlet placed,
As her lips moved in blessing, I felt it was true,
As I took down her story,—I’ll read it to you!

“They had no handsome things; only dingy, old
chairs;
No bright pictures nor games, like my son has up-
stairs;
Their clothes were as poor as could possibly be,
But their grateful young faces were pleasant to see.
Though the rain is still pouring from clouds thick
and gray,
Will my little son stay in contented to-day?”

The boy lifts his head, and the hot flush of shame
Flies over his face like a streak of red flame,
As he says, “I am glad little Katy was fed!
There will come a bright day to go out on my sled!”



LITTLE AMY.

SHE sat, dim Twilight in the room,
A Mother young and fair;
Bright pictures shone amid the gloom,
And birds and flowers were there.

A little bed of curious make,
With daintiest covers spread;
There dimpled, dreamy, half awake,
With curly, tossing head,

The little owner careless lay,
Unconscious of the thought
That moved its Mother's heart to pray
In words that breathed untaught.

Two Summer's bloom had lent its charm,
And moulded into grace
The little child that, safe from harm,
Looked up into her face.

With half-shut eyes the baby smiled,—
Then rose the earnest prayer;
“O, Father, take this darling child,
And mould her 'neath Thy care.

“May tender words and generous deeds,
For every fault atone;
And if I sow the precious seeds,
All praise be Thine alone.

“Oh, grant that never act of mine
May make the precept vain;
Send to my heart the light divine,
To make Thy message plain.

“Fill her young soul—a sacred well—
With true, unselfish thought;
That so each act of hers may tell
What love of Thee hath wrought.”

Daily beside her Mother's knee,
She prays with lisping tone;
"Father in Heaven! take care of me,
And keep me still Thine own.

"Teach me, to Father, Mother, Friend,
My constant love to show;
Thy Holy Spirit daily send,
That I Thy Will may know.

"Write on my heart, through every mood,
This rule so grand and true:
'Do unto others as you would
That they should do to you."

Midst scattered toys the little child
Ran in her careless glee,
Then stopped, and gazed, then softly smiled;
"Oh, Mother! come and see.

"Upon the wall I see *my prayer*,
Made beautiful and gay;
And angel-children smiling there,
Look down upon my play.

"They stretch their hands and look so bright,
It seems as if they say:
'We never have your darker night,
But only endless day!

“Come, little Amy, come, and walk
Within this shining street;
I think they hear me while I talk,
They look so kind and sweet.”

“Dear child, the angels sent from Heaven,
Are always near to you,
Whenever to your heart is given
Some feeling good and true.

“These angels sent from Heaven, my love,
Are watching night and day:
They see wherever you may move,
They hear each word you say.

“And when for some one in his need,
A kindly act you do,
Your little prayer with joy they read,
And say, ‘She lives it, too!’”

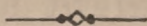
A little maiden true and fair,
It seemed some hidden charm
Had kept her heart from every snare,
Her life from outward harm.

Still, as she grew in peace and love,
With fervent, touching grace,
In daily prayer young Amy knelt,
With reverent, upturned face,

.

And said, as in those tender years
The prayer so early taught;
Its spirit quelling selfish fears,
And moulding every thought.

Again, beside that little bed,
The Mother bent, to say:
“Dear Child, God heard the prayer I said;
He hears you too, to-day!”



THE DISOBEDIENT CHICKS.

IN a farm-yard there lived an old hen and her
chicks;

I counted the number; I know there were six.

Such dear, cunning things, and so downy and
small;

Their hen-coop was sheltered close up by the wall,

And such a nice big one to take a good run,

If it rained, or they couldn't go out in the sun;

And meal, and fresh water were there every day;

They had nothing to do but to eat, sleep, and play.

Now, with so many blessings, these chicks ought
to grow

Into six feathered saints,—how I wish it were so.

The four were as good as a hen could desire,
They came when she called; never got in the mire,
But always looked neat if a neighbor should stop
To talk, at the bars, of the weather or crop;
And when night came, they nestled close under
her wings,
And kept still as could be,—the meek little things.

But the thought of the other two grieved the poor
hen,
And she wished they were back in their egg-shells
again:

Their ways were so naughty. They stood on their
head;

They soiled their down coats; made believe to be
dead;

They teased their young brothers; upset the nice
meal;

And rumbled the hen from her head to her heel.

Then the neighbors would come to complain of
their pranks,

And give—as their recipe—sundry good spansks.

Poor thing, she tried kindness; it didn't succeed;

And punishment,—that was a failure indeed.

One day the two naughty ones, strolling about,
(Though their mother had told them they must
not go out,)

Saw coming a Turkey, so dirty and fat;
One chick nudged the other, and said, "Look at
that."

"Oh, you needn't be proud," said the Turkey;
"for me,
I've been travelling all night to find what I could
see;

And the world is so large, I am quite out of breath;
Poor, weak little things, you'd be tired to death."

"And is it so wonderful out of the yard?"

Said one little chick: "I declare it's too hard,
That we should be penned in this mean, narrow
place;"

Here he bit his toe-nail, and then made a grimace.

"To travel, my mother says, makes one refined;
It expands all the powers; it enlarges the mind;
And gives such an appetite; makes one so strong;
Now here it's so stupid; the days are so long,
And the pleasures you have are contemptibly few,
While abroad there are many, exciting, and new."
So saying, he hurried away to be fed,
Having dropped a new scheme in each little chick's
head.

One glanced at the other, and whispered, "Let's
go."

The other looked frightened, but didn't say no.

That very same night, when the rest were all in,
The two naughty chicks,—never caring a pin
For all their poor mother would suffer that night,
From nervous sick-headache, produced by her
fright,—

Crept under the gate, and ran clear down the lane;
The old watch dog looked, blinking, and growled,
“They’re insane.”

They went till they came to a very large tree:
“O, the moon has gone out; it’s as dark as can
be,”

Said the timid one, trying to look through the
shade:

“I wish in the hen-coop with mother I’d stayed.”

“Now, such a weak coward I never did see;
You can’t have the moon when you’re under a
tree,”

Said the other one: “There, we are out in the
light;

Which way shall we wander this beautiful night?”

“If I might advise you, my charming young
dears,”

Said a low, friendly voice, very close to their ears,
“I would say, go with me, for I’m used to be out,
And I know every point to be seen on the route.

If your mother were with you, I'd not interfere,
But you need some adviser; no other seems
near."

"O, thank you most kindly," said each little
chick,

And the younger one added: "I'll get a small
stick

To aid me in walking; I'm not very strong."

"O, fudge!" said the other; "Come, hurry along."

"No! give a good spring, and jump up on my
head;

Take travelling quite easy," the pleasant friend said.

So he carried the chick with a bland, smiling
face,

Going slowly, to suit with the other one's pace.

"And what is your name?" said the one by his
side.

"Mr. Fox," said the other: "Pray, how do you
ride

So high on my head?" "It's delightful up here."

"You had better ride double. Come, jump, my
young dear."

So he trotted along with both chicks on his head,
And they whispered together, "How kind, and
well bred!"

He went, till he stopped at the end of a wall,
That stood in the moonlight, and shadowed them
all.

“My house,” said the owner: “I hope you’ll stop
in,

And take a good bite ere your travels begin.

I must first see my little ones safe off to bed.”

The chicks were well pleased, and they nodded
their head;

So he entered the hole, put a stone at the door,

And the little chicks touched terra firma once
more.

There, up in a corner, their eyes very wide,

Two jolly young foxes rolled,—one on each
side.

They didn’t get up when their father came in,

But they showed their front teeth in an amiable
grin.

“My dears, I have brought you two plump little
chicks;”

By way of an answer they gave two slight kicks.

“There is just one apiece, and I trust they are
prime.

Now eat at your leisure; there’s plenty of time.”

A terrible light on the chickens now broke.

“O, pray, don’t be frightened, it’s only a joke.

To think you should come to the house of a fox:
If your mother should hear it you'll get a good
box.

You'll have so much to tell to the other small
chicks."

Here the foxes, impatient, gave two more slight
kicks.

"Yes, darlings, eat slowly your nice little lunch,
Like good, pretty foxes." One horrible crunch,
And both little chickens were lost to the sight
In the very same second, that terrible night.



QUEEN DISCONTENT.

A STATELY white palace, it rose on the air,
A palace of marble, with tapestries rare;
Bright streamers were flying, and music rose
sweet,
And fell like faint echoes the quick glancing feet,
That danced under arches of marble and gold.
Close by the grand palace a broad river rolled,
As shining as silver; where beautiful skiffs.
By magic, would float to the opposite cliffs,

Or stop at green islands where grottoes were
made,

To temper the sunlight with pleasanter shade.

Within the high walls there are pictures most rare,
And cushions of damask; rich garments to wear;
All viands most delicate; pages to wait;
And guards to fling open the ponderous gate,
When the owner of all, in her jewels and pride,
Sweeps out with tall courtiers who ride at her side.

There are children there, too; with no lessons;
all ease;

They have only their own passing fancies to please.
They may sing, dance, and play; or may wander
at will;

Or sit in the grottoes, so shaded and still;
Or ride on gay horses, that speed like a flash,
Yet are gentle as summer, to suit the most rash.
They may pluck the ripe fruit from most beautiful
trees,

Where birds carol sweet to the answering breeze;
With no one to chide, and unlimited sway;
Where else may one find such bright creatures as
they?

Ah! but look at their faces. These trappings;
this show,
Cannot hide the deep weariness seething below.

Their eyes are so restless ; the roses of health
Do not bloom on their cheeks. All this leisure
and wealth

Cannot wake up a smile, and no voices ring out
Into sudden rejoicing. They wander about
With listless, young faces, untrammelled in will,
Where all is so lovely, but sullen and still.

Ah ! a shadow hangs over the beautiful place,
And broods, like dull nightmare, on every one's
face.

From the Queen, with her gems, and great beauty
and pride,

To the little page, bending so low at her side,
The same blighting shadow hangs over them all,
And they never look glad when the little birds
call,

In the beautiful spring-time, from trees overhead,
To their friends flying home, but look weary
instead.

In vain all the beauty of river and land ;
The Queen, with one wave of her delicate hand,
Seems to banish all joy from the thoughts of the
rest ;

And she wears a rich jewel, that gleams on her
breast

With a lustre so baleful, the clear light of day
From her palace and gardens seems fading away.

And the birds cease their song when she steps on
the path

Leading down through green trees to her beautiful
bath ;

And one bright little bird, peeping over his nest,
Hears the sigh that she heaves, with her hand on
her breast.

From the tower, at the top of a high grassy mound,
Her children may look on the country around,
And see a small cottage, close by a great wood,
Where the trees, like tall sentinels, lovingly
stood.

Fresh roses and myrtle climb over the door ;
When the owner comes forth, the birds sing out
the more.

The flowers are more fragrant ; the bright summer
air

Seems so balmy and cool when her shadow falls
there ;

And her children, how rosy ! Their laugh sweet
and clear,

Is music, indeed, to the listening ear.

From the tower they see them, in calico frocks,
Go out with their baskets, and climbing the rocks,
Pass into the woods to pick berries. You see
These children are busy, just like the small bee

You read of in primers, but ready for fun,
As you plainly may see, when their tasks are all
done.

Ah ! the smile of their Mother is lovely to see,
As she plays at bo-peep with the child on her knee.
She needs no rich jewels ; her eyes are so bright,
They seem overflowing with love, and with light ;
And her voice is not sharp like the tone of the
Queen ;

It sounds like the brook gliding over the green,
By the side of the wood, in its ripples and glee ;
So a little one thinks, standing close to her knee.

If they play on the green sward, and frolic, and
sing,

You feel that their mirth is a genuine thing.
They never look cross ; and one yields to the rest,
When they think some particular play is the best.
And they wait on each other ; no pages are there ;
No jewels gleam out from their rich, wavy hair.
They've no grottoes nor skiffs, but the song of the
birds

Rings a very sweet chime to their true, loving
words ;

And they run like the deer in the Queen's neigh-
boring park,

And no shadow hangs o'er them, so baleful and
dark.

The children that gaze have an envying sneer,
When the shout of the little ones falls on their ear,
As they call to each other, and hide 'mid the rocks;
“Plebeians that wear such mean calico frocks,”
Said the elder one, turning to go down the tower:
“The sight of them sickened me once for an hour;
I try hard to banish them out of my head,
I hate so to hear them; I wish they were dead!”

“I know they have something that we haven't
got;
I dare say they have found a more beautiful spot
Than any we know of,” the younger one said—
“How I wish that I lived in the cottage instead!
They eat with such relish the luncheon they take,
When they run home from school; and they keep
wide awake,
While I always am sleepy from morning till
night.”
Here she gave a low sob, in her anger and spite.

Can you guess, little one, who the Mother may be,
That played with the frolicsome child on her knee;
Who can never grow bitter, nor wrinkled, nor old;
Whose bright face is a study and joy to behold?
The Mother that drops such rich blessings on all,
Though she owns no broad lands, and her cottage
is small?

If you pray for her coming, she'll speak to your
heart,
And teach you the holy and beautiful art,
Her children had learned through their work and
their play;
May you grow, little friend, as contented as they.

—♦—

ANNIE'S TEMPTATION.

TEMPTATION crept into the garden that day,
And whispered, "Be silent! No word need
you say,

For nobody saw you; your Aunt needn't know
Who trampled her flowers, uprooting them so.
She will blame some one else. If you tell, she may
scold;

And you know if her manner is angry or cold,
You'll be frightened. Then, really, you're not
much to blame;

Your Cousins would hide it precisely the same;
So only be quiet; there's nothing untrue
In silence when no one is speaking to you!"

Poor Annie! she stood in the garden that day,
The beautiful flower-bed all torn away;

One rose-bush uprooted—disorder alone
Marked the spot where the choicest pet-flowers had
blown.

The child stood bewildered, in secret despair;
Only yesterday evening the flowers looked so fair,
That she stopped at the sight in the midst of her
play,

Then unfastened the latch, and ran down the broad
way

That was bordered with box and with rose-bushes,
too;

Oh, such a sad change! and now what should she
do!

She remembered too well who alone was to blame,
And hung down her head in confusion and shame.
She had run from the garden to see the ducks fed;
All thoughts of the gate driven out of her head;
And forgetting to latch it, some hungry young
swine

Had come in to root—perhaps hoping to dine.

But one week ago, as she bid her good-bye,
Her Mother had said, with a smile and a sigh,
“My dear little daughter, whate’er you may hear,
Speak out the plain truth without faltering or fear!
And if you are tempted, oh, think what I say,
And God will direct you the true, honest way!”

This rang in her ears as she stood there alone,
As white and as still as a statue of stone.

Then slowly she turned,—if her lips breathed no
prayer,

God read her young heart, and He knew it was
there;

And into the parlor she went with firm tread;
The cunning temptation forever had fled.

“Indeed, I’m so sorry, I’m ready to cry!

I left the gate open—the pigs going by
Ran into the garden! The bed is all torn.

When I saw it it made me so sick and forlorn,
I thought I must hide it. Then a voice seemed to
say:

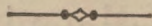
‘No! I point you, my child, to the true, honest
way.’

I know I was careless—deserving your blame—
But God said I must tell you, so Auntie, I came.”

She stood there, all trembling, expecting to hear
The voice of a judge ringing sternly and clear;
The flowers in the garden were always her pride,
But now a strange tremor all sternness belied.

“Don’t think of the flowers, my darling,” she said,
“The thought of them never will enter my head.
We will plant some together, to fill up the space
The little pigs made in their wild, naughty race.

We will add some new seeds from the flowers near
the door,
And make it far prettier than ever before.
When I walk there at Twilight, I'll think, dear of
you,
And pray our kind Father, so loving and true,
To guard and to guide you, till smiling you stand,
'Midst the lovelier flowers in His beautiful land!"



THE OLD BEAR.

THERE was once an old Bear just as grim as
could be,
And he lived in a cave near an old hollow tree;
This last was quite large, and his summer resort,
Where, in the mild weather, he held quite a court.
He had really no wit in his stupid old head,
But the rest thought him brilliant, and very well
read,
For he owned two large volumes, as thick as could
be;
They knew not one letter—and neither did he.
I wish you had seen him—to laugh in your sleeve:
He was such an old sham—such a real make-be-
lieve!

There he sat with the spectacles over his nose,
A very fine picture of learned repose.
How he came by the specs we'll not stop to inquire :
He owned they were costly, the honest, old buyer !

One foot gently tapped on the moss-covered ground ;
One paw rested over the scar of a wound,
On the side of his head, which was nodding the while,
And his face had not even the gleam of a smile.
He sat just as prim as some people you see,
And very much like them—between you and me !
So there in the cool, pleasant part of the day,
He would give his advice, and the rest would obey.

But don't suppose wisdom for nothing they got !
He had many young bears ; to provide for the lot
Was his mission on earth, now their Mother was
dead ;

And he gave a deep sigh, or a shake of his head,
When one that was said to resemble that saint,
(She would fight to the death, with no sign of a
faint,)

Would bite his Pa's leg, or snarl low at the rest ;
Of all his young Bears, the beloved and best !

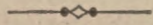
The animals came in great numbers to him ;
The tree was so small that they couldn't get in,
But they stood at the door and did just as he said,
If he told them to stand on their feet or their head ;

And good things in plenty he got for a fee —
A better kept table you rarely would see.

Such treats as they had at the back of the cave!
The favorite said it was needless to save,
When their Father was rich, and could get what
he pleased;

Although he was old, and his lungs were diseased.
For, earlier in life he had roughed it, you know,
And near middle age he once slept in the snow,
And took a bad cold; but his doctor had said
That "mind would support life, with such a fine
head,"

And he proved it was true in that old, hollow tree,
And grew pompous and fat as a Bear could well be!



THE ENVIOUS ROSE.

WITH fragrant roses, bright green leaves,
Beside the hedge it grows,
And many a drop of dew receives,
At dawn and daylight's close.

The little birds hop, singing round;
The chirping cricket came;
The loving breeze with soothing sound,
Seemed breathing out her name;

There humming bees would often come
Beneath the shady trees;
The Rose, you think, in such a home,
With visitors like these,

Must be content. It was not so.

The foolish little tree
In some gay garden longed to grow;
Prey to her vanity!

Within her sight, beyond the wall,
A gaudy sunflower grows;
'Midst fragrant flowers, above them all,
Its yellow petals rose.

"I wish, among the other flowers,
My happier lot was thrown!"
Still sighed the Rose—one thought that sours
All joys that bless her own.

"Here in this lonely spot long pent,
My beauty is in vain!"
Thus in a foolish discontent,
I heard the Rose complain.

There came a sudden storm one night,
The blast swept through the trees;
When Morning dawns a novel sight
The trembling Rose-bush sees.

A drenching rain is falling still;
Tall trees uprooted lie;
Dark clouds that hang above the hill
Like angry ghosts go by;

And ruin marks the scene around,
The little Rose-tree knew;
Torn leaves and branches strew the ground,
Where once soft zephyrs blew.

The Rose, beside the friendly hedge,
Protected through the night,
Looks towards the garden's farthest edge,
To see the Sunflower bright.

A headless stalk alone she sees,
All broken, bent, and bare;
The Sunflower flaunting in the breeze,
No longer rises there!

With shame for all her discontent,
The Rose-tree hung its head;
"I read the lesson that was meant!"
At length she humbly said.

THE VERY VAIN CHILD.

SHE was such a vain child! Now, I've frequently
heard

Of folks here and there who have spoken a word
That showed they admired their own darling self;
But any like this one—the vain little elf—
I never have heard of! At home or at school
She thought of her beauty, and made it a rule
To stand by herself at the pier-glass each day,
There to practice fine graces, while nurse was away.

She was just ten years old—with bright eyes, to be
sure,

But her pertness and mincing I could not endure.
If she only had walked like a free, happy child,
And forgotten that people looked on when she
smiled;

If she gently had raised those large eyes to my face,
In the charm of a loving and innocent grace,
I'd have said to myself, "What a dear little thing!
She touches my heart like the breathing of Spring!
There's nothing that I could refuse her to do,
From relating a story to tying her shoe.
I would feel more than paid if she gave me a kiss;"
But you see there's some difference 'twixt that one
and this.

Just near her there lived such a dear little girl!
Her hair, rather short, had forgotten to curl,
And her nose was no model; her mouth was not
small;

She had really fine eyes; I believe that is all
I can say for her beauty, but blooming with health!
A very desirable sort of a wealth.

Then her ways were so real! If she felt it, she
smiled;

If she didn't, looked serious—the fresh-hearted
child!

If she put her soft hand in the palm of my own,
And told some small secret in musical tone;
Or if in the square she was running at play,
No thought of beholders to get in her way;
Or if she was laughing with hearty good will;
Or if she was thinking and sitting so still,
I loved her through all, and will think, to the end,
The same loving thoughts of my dear little friend.

If the other one happened to spoil a new dress,
She looked quite overcome in her sobbing distress.
But my happier young friend was not troubled,
you see,

For her frocks were as plain as a child's well could
be;

And she felt she could run with a careless good will,
And her clothes be as safe as if perched up quite
still.

Then if a small child was in trouble, she'd run,
Entirely forgetting her own little fun,
To help it, and drive back the fast coming tear,
By whispering some funny thing close to its ear,
To bring back the laugh! If an artist had passed,
He'd have said, "Here's the picture I've looked for
at last!"

Yes, then she was beautiful! Painters can see
What to put in their pictures for you and for me!



THE TWO FRIENDS.

"I WANT to tell you something strange!
I'm sure I cannot see
Why Mary Grey should ever change
The way she has to me.

"Why, Mother, when we used to play
Down by those shaded rocks,
I always liked to do her way,
And gave her Dolly's frocks.

"Because she couldn't sew as fast;
And when we climbed for flowers,
I freshened hers that they might last
As long as those of ours

"I saw you fix; I loved her so,
It seemed the easiest way.
I followed when she wished to go;
Sat still if she would stay.

"She used to call me 'Little Pet,'
Though I was tall as she;
But now I never can forget
The way she acts to me!

"For ever since we've gone to school,
And always in the class,
Her face no more is beautiful,
If I should chance to pass.

"She frowns, and says some cutting word
At any little praise
My teacher drops that she has heard;
I fairly hate her ways!

"And when the other girls with me
Are playing on the green,
She tries to make us disagree,
And calls me pert and mean.

"She frightened me when yesterday
I met her in the lane,
She looked so cross; in just that way
That makes her hard and plain!

“She says she hates to hear me speak,
I try to stand so high;
She teased me all this live-long week,
And fairly made me cry.

“I bore it, Mother, for I said,
‘Perhaps she soon will see
These new, odd notions in her head
Are most unjust to me!’

“I tried to still be very kind,
But nothing seems to do.
She hid my missing book, I find,
And broke my pen in two.

“So now I see it’s all in vain;
She only says the more,
And tries her best to give me pain,
Worse than she did before.

“Now, Mother, darling, won’t you say,
‘My dear, it’s very true,
There really seems no other way—
Treat her as she treats you!’ ”

“Not so, my own, dear little girl,”
The list’ning Mother said,
Still smoothing many a glossy curl
That clustered round her head.

"I love you far too well to say,
'Give bitter ill for ill;'
So follow in the blessed way
Of Hope and Patience still.

"You know the story that we read,
Of One who long ago
Prayed in His lonely, dying need,
For those who wronged Him so.

"When you are tempted, hasty one,
To angry, loud reply,
Think, dear, of Him, the Holy Son,
Let malice pass you by,

"And kindly pity take its place,
Towards one so plainly wrong.
So will my now impulsive Grace
Grow calm, and true, and strong.

"Think of the hell within her heart,
While you, more blest, are free
To follow the diviner part
Of patient Charity!"

THE YOUNG SOLDIER.

SHE stood in the little room, furnished with
skill,

Its owner now gone, it was shaded and still;
In that silence she never had noticed before,
When she ran in the morning to knock at the
door,

And rouse her young brother to breakfast betimes,
In those days he was lazy,—the worst of his crimes.

She looked at the table where lesson books lay
So carelessly, just as he tossed them away,
When the thought in his heart spoke out louder
than books,

And new power flamed into his speech and his
looks.

That odd little picture, the pride of his heart,
He so proudly had bought in defiance of art!
Among those more beautiful still it was hung;
Ah! whisper it kindly; the boy was so young.

There, over the mantle, a rusty old sword;
Most precious, since deep in its handle was scored
The name of the owner, so noble and true,
Who served his dear Country, and died for it, too.

And under it, lost in a medley array,
Two crucibles stood, where, in hours fled away,
He had melted, and worked, as a boy only can;
War tested his soul: lo, he springs forth a man!

The fire of the conflict for toys of his youth;
Deep thoughts of his Country; strong love for the
Truth;
Warm thoughts for the dear ones who breathe a
quick prayer,
When the rumor of battle is borne on the air;
These mould his young manhood, and strengthen
his will.

God rules! waiting heart, let repining be still!

She stood, till the glow of that beautiful face
Seemed to light up the gloom of the desolate
place;
And again it was cheerful; made pleasant and
fair,
In the light of his spirit still lingering there.

THE GRATEFUL BIRD.

TWO boys went out nutting. The bright, pleasant air
Swept through the tall trees that were leafless and bare,
As they turned from the road, and went into the wood,
Where grew those large chestnuts, so sweet and so good.
With their bags in their hands, they went at a brisk run,
Their faces aglow in the light of the sun.

As they entered the path, they both heard a sharp sound,
And giving a start, both the children looked round,
And saw in a clearing, quite close to the wood,
Two men with their guns, as expectant they stood.

Just then, on the dry leaves, so crisp to the tread,
A little bird dropped; the boys thought it was dead;
But stooping, one touched it, it fluttered a wing,
And he picked up, quite gently, the beautiful thing.

It was scarlet all over; a tuft on its head;
It once carolled in gladness; now silence, instead,
Said plainly, there needed no answer in words,
It had met some dark foe to the sweet singing
birds.

One wing lay quite helpless; a bright drop of blood
Fell down on the leaves where the little boys
stood.

One said, looking down on the poor, fluttering
thing,

As it slowly turned over, uplifting one wing,
“You had best wring its neck, for I know it will
die.”

But the other one paused, and he made no reply.

“It will be in our way; and we came to have
fun.”

Then he glanced quite impatiently up towards the
sun.

“No; I’ll take it to Carrie. It isn’t dead yet;
I heard her so wishing to have a nice pet;
And this bird is so pretty; I’ll make it a bed,
Till I take it to her to be tended and fed.”

So he gathered some leaves, and put stones all
around,

Then the poor little warbler was laid on the
ground.

Then they went till they reached a large, well-laden tree,
Where they picked for an hour, as pleased as could be ;
Then they shouldered their bag, and one stopped for the bird,
Which seemed somewhat revived, for faint chirpings were heard.

As they stopped at the farm-yard, a little girl came
To meet them : " O, boys ! what a terrible shame !
Who hurt it, poor thing ? Will you give it to me ?
Do you think it will live ? What a beauty to see !"
" Here it is," said her brother ; the kind little face
Looked quite lovely with interest, and merciful grace,
As her kisses fell soft on the poor little bird ;
Which was grateful, I know, though it said not a word.

So she doctored it up, and the wound was soon healed,
Though the little boy thought its death-sentence was sealed ;
And it grew tame and merry,—she loved it, you know,—
This the bird seemed to guess, though it couldn't say so.

All the winter she kept it, and fed it with care.
On a sunshiny day, if you chanced to look there,
You would see in the morning, hung under the
 shed,
The little bird tossing the tuft on its head ;
And singing so sweetly ; then, always at night,
It was warm in the house, in its cage large and
 tight.

Winter passed ; Spring-time came with its fresh,
 balmy breeze ;
Leaves blossomed, and silently covered the trees
That stood in the sunlight, so dreary and grey,
When the two boys went nutting that clear, frosty
 day ;
Little birds coming back, sang a wonderful tune,
And they all seemed delighted, as if it were June.

Then the little girl said, “ O, my own darling bird,
I know the sweet call of your friends you have
 heard ;
You listen, and hold up your dear little head ;
Well, now you’ve been cared for, and tenderly fed ;
But you want to go back to the beautiful trees ;
You are weary of small, prosy comforts like these.
You wish to live up in a beautiful nest,
And fly where you please ; I suppose you know
 best.

Yes, go, little bird ! but have prudence and care,
For the cruel bird-killers may chance to come there;
And you know what they are, for you've met
them before ;”

Here the little girl climbed up and opened the door:
“Fly out, little darling !” she said, with a sigh,
“I wouldn't detain you ; now sing a good-bye.”

The bird seemed delighted, and perched on her
head,

Though she thought he would fly to the tree-top
instead.

Then she kissed him, and said, “You are grateful,
I know ;

But your friends call again ; I suppose you must
go.”

And the little bird flew from her head to her hand,
As if her kind words he could quite understand.

Then he flew to the top of a beautiful tree,
Where his friends were all waiting, as gay as could
be ;

And he sang a sweet song as a grateful farewell ;
I am sure he meant more than his warbling could
tell.

Then the birds, the same instant, all fluttered away,
To seek out their old homes in the sweet month
of May.

THE EMPTY HOUSE.

GREY, narrow, and chill, with its roof moss-grown,

Shutters half hingeless, and creaking door,
Where the wind creeps in with a stifled moan,
Starting thick dust from the dingy floor,—

Mocked in the water, sunlighted and clear,
Gliding o'er rushes deep, fringing its bank;
A shade of the Past, in its loneliness drear,
Stands that silent house, in the morn-dewsdank.

The grass, long untrodden by human foot,
Rises tall and rank in the silent lane,
And the grim, old poplars, with rain-bleached roots,
Will never be covered with green again.

Three children, their satchels carelessly swung,
In the fresh'ning sunlight of Youth and of Morn,
Sit on the fence, and one eager tongue
Tells the curse that blighted ere they were born.

How one, with a soft voice, but cruel and cold,
Lived where bright roses their odors then threw;
How he struck dead the friend who had lent him
his gold,
And hid his dark burden where pond-lilies grew.

The child of the farmer who tilled the land,
Crossing the stile, in the morning grey,
Shrank from the touch of his proffered hand,
As frowning, and trembling, he strode away.

With her pail in her hand, long she stood in the
lane,
Wondering, and watching the path he trod;
Twice o'er his shoulder he looked again,
As his feet pressed more quickly the dewy sod.

She tells how he fled to a foreign land,
Where skies were more beautiful, flowers more
fair;
Years brought him grey hairs, and a trembling
hand,
And a soul, whose tenant was wild despair.

“And still, when yon village bell strikes one,
The rushes part with a strange, low sound;”—
The children turn pale in the morning sun,
And, with startled eyes, at the reeds glance
round.

'Tis only a waterfowl's rustling wing
Wakens the echoes that slept once more,
And the children turn from the startled thing,
And the gleam on the dreary House is o'er.

FORBEAR.

ONE little word so beautiful,
Like blessing on the air;
I give it as a sacred rule—
The little word *Forbear!*

When angry glance or word unkind
Kindles your heart to flame
Say quickly in your inmost mind,
“Shall I then do the same?”

Forbear! the blessed reign of Peace
You help to usher in,
When words of angry passion cease,
And generous thoughts begin.

If by strange malice blindly driven,
Some injury is done,
Say, “Help me, Father up in Heaven!
To imitate Thy Son.”

He prayed when angry men reviled
-For all, but most for those
Who wronged him deepest; thus, dear child,
He acted towards His foes.

Still in your tasks or daily play,
His spirit you may show,
And walk in faith the blessed way,
He trod so long ago!



GEORGE AND HIS CANARY.

LITTLE George had a bird that would sing clear
and sweet,
And seed and fresh chickweed he gave it to eat.
There was nothing too good for the dear little thing;
Had it spoken, and asked for a pretty gold ring
To wear on one claw—or a cap for its head—
Or a knife and a fork—or a dear little bed
To put its head into instead of its wing—
Little George would have said, “You shall have
every thing
That you want, my dear bird!—you have only to
say
What you like! Shall I order your dinner to-day?”

The bird couldn't speak, but he sang every day;
His owner sat under him deep in his play,
But stopped very often to glance up above,
To show his dear pet his approval and love.

Sometimes he would give it a nice piece of cake
For its dessert, and often would sugar lumps take
Away from the table, to give it to eat;
One cause, I suppose, that its song was so sweet.

If a friend came to play, George would take him
to see

How attractive his little Canary could be;
And young Dick would hop round, as if trying to
say,

“I’m quite glad to see you!—A very fine day!”
Or out of the cage like a flash he would fly,
If he opened the door, and his bright little eye
Would single out George; then it perched on his
head,

Or sometimes it would fly on his finger instead,
And would sing loud and clear, so each sweet, ring-
ing note,

Seemed to come from a concert-hall deep in his
throat!

Each night a kind Aunt of young George went up-
stairs

To the nursery, before even saying her prayers,
To be sure the Canary was safe for the night
In its cage, and the door closed, and fastened quite
tight.

But one night she forgot to quite fasten the door,
Though she ne’er had omitted her kindness before.

She saw him so plain on his perch as he stirred,
But ah, never again did she see the dear bird!

You must know, in the house that there lived a big
cat,

A terrible foe to a mouse or a rat;
And it grieves me to tell it—so fond of a bird—
It would swallow one down ere you'd speak half a
word.

This night, as it chanced, she was prowling around;
Creeping into the room, there the cage door she
found

Was quite on a crack; it flew wide 'neath her claw,
And the dear little bird in its sound sleep she saw,
Unconscious of danger! No time she let slip,
But crushed the poor bird with one terrible grip!
A bright yellow feather flew out from its side,
And showed how the dear little innocent died!

Poor George! in his heart he felt something was
wrong,

When he missed the glad notes of the bird's morn-
ing song.

So he climbed to the cage, and he knew its sad fate!
Poor Dicky! its owner had come in too late
To save its dear life! How he sobbed and he
cried,

As if now every joy to his life were denied.

As he sat in despair, looking up at the cage,
He jumped up indignant, o'erflowing with rage,
Against the big cat that had killed his dear bird;
And seizing a stick, without saying a word,
He ran through the entry, where 'sconced on a mat,
And taking her comfort, the murderess sat.

Puss ran for her life when she noticed his look,
And the stick, that still sobbing, he wrathfully
shook,
And she scampered up-stairs at a wonderful pace;
Her legs were much swifter at running a race;
But George followed, and when 'neath a table she
flew,
He poked—and the racing began then anew.

I'm afraid that he gave her some pretty hard
knocks,
Before she could hide in an old wooden box,
Far back in the garret, where he could not creep,
There she quietly nestled to have a good sleep;
Untroubled by nightmare, for what she had done,
While she laughed to herself at the race she had
won!

THE OLD TABLE.

A SOLID old Table, but shabby and grey,
Cook said that it really seemed quite in the
way!

She wanted a newer to stand in its place,
To give to her kitchen an air and a grace.
And, Thomas, the coachman, with humorous stare,
Said, "Impudence, sure, for the thing to be there!"

The chairs, rather newer, said they were ashamed,
And fairly must creak if the table were named.
They liked, for their own part, all things to agree;
A meaner old table they never did see.

The plates on the dresser took up the same cry,
And clattered derision so constant and high,
A nervous glass bottle in cupboard above,
Said headache would really compel him to move,
Unless they abated their sarcasm and noise,
Confining their plateships to quieter joys.

Clothes-horse in the corner harped on the same
string,
And said he was tired of the shabby old thing!

He liked in a neighbor both beauty and use;—
The Table bent under their load of abuse!

Cook carried her point, and a new one was got,
The smallest and showiest one out of a lot;
With legs that were twisted remarkably small,
It seemed a mere chance it had any at all;
“It showed like a mirror,” with varnish so bright,
Cook said in her statement undoubtedly right.

The shabby old table, though strong as a horse,
Stood off by itself in a corner, of course;
With nothing to do and with nothing to say,
There to keep itself quietly out of the way.
Its rival now held a conspicuous place;
The kitchen was charmed with its polish and grace.

Alas for its triumph! A servant one day
Came in a great hurry, when Cook was away,
And out of two baskets the marketing poured,
Till the leaf of the poor little table was stored.

One creak, that seemed like a petition to save—
One quick, awkward wrench the weak table then
gave—
One groan in that kitchen heard never before—
One lurch, and its contents rolled down on the
floor!

Potatoes rolled this way—the meat it rolled that;—
One melon was crushed so remarkably flat
By the leg crashing through it,—it lay there as neat
As if spread for some dainty young piggy to eat.
The coachman said, “Steam-power was left in the
shade;

A smarter young table sure never was made.”

The vain little table, oh, what a sad sight!
All crooked,—one leg broke—deplorable plight!
And the worst of the case, and the hardest to bear,
The once flattering neighbors seemed never to care.
Indeed, one great dish fairly cracked with its fun;
It was plain the short reign of the table was done.

The one breath of pity that swept o’er the crash,
When melon was put in that terrible mash,
Creaked out from Old Table—a bit of a saint,
Though never rejoicing in polish or paint.
Then he added, (you surely can pardon his thought,)
“Poor thing! it would carry more weight than it
ought!

I know I am old, somewhat creaking and plain,
But I guess they’ll find use for this Table again!”

FRESH FLOWERS.

A LITTLE girl with earnest look,
Ran 'midst the garden flowers;
With eager hands the buds she took,
All wet with Summer showers.

A boy pulled at the apron wide,
That held her blooming store;
"Come, throw those tiny things away;
I'll help to pluck some more.

"Mamma would like the bigger kind
She hardly ever sees;
You always leave them here behind;
Why don't you gather these?"

He broke a Sunflower from its stalk,
Above his glossy head;
"I look at this kind when I walk;
Take some of these instead."

"But, Eddy, Mother likes the kind
That smell so fresh and sweet;
So, little brother, never mind;
Stand down upon your feet.

“We'll go arrange the flowers now,
For poor Mamma to see;
And then I'll tell her, darling, how
You helped to fix with me.”

The child ran in with eager pace,
Then quietly he stood
And handed flowers, and watched that face
So beautiful and good.

“Now, pet, go have a pleasant run.
I'll throw these stalks away;
Go find the boys, and take some fun,
This clear, delightful day!”

The boy ran out, as on the stair
A step fell soft and slow,
And entered soon the Mother fair,
Whose children loved her so.

Her little daughter drew a chair
With softest cushions spread;
“Come, Mother, breathe this balmy air!”
Most tenderly she said.

Then close beside her Mother's knee
Her little chair she brought;
You saw that love most true and free,
Had made them one in thought.

“All is so lovely, dear,” she said;
I look upon the flowers,
And bless the Giver who has made
These fair creations ours,

“And given such willing little hands
To meet my slightest needs;
And thus I know in holier lands
He sows more precious seeds,

“And gathers all in love at last,
Within His gardens fair;
When Autumn comes with searching blast,
Dear child, I may be there!

“Lift up your face! no bitter tears,
My little one, be shed
For one who feels no timid fears;
Listen to me instead.

“When in the quiet room above,
You see a figure pale,
That clasped you once in tenderest love,
Let not your young heart fail;

“Nor think the Father of us all
Hath dealt too hard a blow.
He sees the little sparrow fall;
He makes these blossoms blow;

“And to His children sorrowing here,
As o’er those in the skies,
His tender blessing, ever near,
Bids living Trust arise.

“No King upon a distant throne,
This Father kind and true;
You cannot ever be alone;
He always watches you.

“A voice within your heart will say,
She only went before;
A little space you two will stay,
Then all will meet once more!

“This love of mine will never die,
Wherever I may be.
No mourning robe, no heavy sigh,
My little girl, for me.

But plant to wave upon the wind
Above my silent dust,
The fairest flowers your hands can find,
To breathe of Hope and Trust!”

Chill Autumn came; the garden walks
Are strewn with yellow stores
Of rustling leaves, and withered stalks
Waved round the close-shut doors.

Within the room where two once sate,
And breathed the Summer air,
Till twilight shadows round them wait,
Two children nestle there

The elder has the tender smile
Her Mother's face had worn,
When so unselfish all the while
Diviner life was born.

And gazing in those brimming eyes
Uplifted to her own,
In that young heart new thoughts arise,
And in the loving tone,

She caught from lips that always spoke
To kindle hope and joy,
A tender meaning slowly broke
Upon the wondering boy.

"She isn't dead?—and can she hear
Whatever I may say!
I heard a whisper at my ear,
This morning in my play;

"I guess she told me not to frown,
When Walter made me miss.
I kept the ugly feeling down;
Does she see things like this?

“Oh, now I know why every day
You pick these gay, fresh flowers,
And fix them in the same old way;
I thought them only ours.

“I looked upon her chair to-day,
And felt so very sad!
But if she's happy far away,
I'll try to feel more glad;

“And be to every one I know
As kind as I can be:
And then, when into Heaven I go,
She'll kiss and welcome me.”

The shadows stole as once they fell,
Though on a vacant chair;
But with the children all was well,—
Faith, Hope, and Love were there!

Oh, doubt not on that tender sight
A loving Mother gazed,
Though into realms of changeless light
Her human soul was raised.

THE CONCEITED FOWL.

THERE was once a young Chicken, so very
absurd,
That he tossed up his head when a beautiful bird
Flew over the yard; then would rustle his wing,
And say, "Does that fellow suppose he can sing!
My voice, if brought out in some musical school,
I'm sure would be finer. He don't sing by rule;
And as for his feathers, it's only the sun
Makes them shine so. I know when the daylight
is done,
He's as ugly as sin. I'm quite handsome, I know;
And all chickens will say so, the older I grow.
My feathers are greyish, and each one the shade
Of the other. Then all are as evenly laid
As if they'd been placed by some cunning machine;
While his feathers are mixed, and not fit to be
seen."

Now, outside the wall was a very large pond,
Where the ducklings, of water excessively fond,
Strayed out very often to have a good swim.
There, quite as regardless of grace as of limb,
They threw up the water in many a prank,
And then they would rest on the low, muddy
bank,

Sitting up in the sun. There they clacked just as
loud

As a speaker I heard once, addressing a crowd.

One day this young Chicken, so full of conceit,
Whilst spying about for some luncheon to eat,
Discovered, with rapture, a hole in the wall,
Where he squeezed himself through, for the
Chicken was small;

And he thought, "I dare say I may see something
fine

To tell to the rest when we all meet to dine;
And I talk so delightfully! What a great treat;
They will relish it more than the food that they
eat."

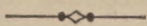
Then he smoothed down his feathers, and walked
to the bank,

Thence down to the pond, where he leisurely
drank.

"How cool and refreshing it looks over there;
It must be so pleasant; I really declare,
I think I may venture to take a small swim,
Without any danger to life or to limb.

I know that the ducks go in twice every day,
And it's such a good chance, while they all are away,
To take my first lesson; I know I can learn;
How surprised they will be if they chance to
return.

My talents are great, and my will is quite strong;
Yes, I really will try it; I'll not stay in long.
To get a good impetus first, for a start,"—
So he perched on the side of an old broken cart,
Quite close to the bank, with a slant towards the
left;
Then this silly young Chicken, of instinct bereft,
Flew off, with a terrible rush down the bank,
Straight into the water, and instantly sank!



KING WILL.

“**I** THINK I'd like to be a king,”
Said little Will, one day;
He threw aside the loosened string,
That twirled his top away.

And turned with such a serious look,
His Father smiled, and said:
“I know you rarely read a book;
How came that in your head?

“It seems to me a curious thing;
Our own dear Land is free;
Now tell me just the kind of king
My son would wish to be.”

“I’d have a palace, rare and high,
With guards in clothes so grand;
That never stopped to question why,
But did my least command.

“My throne should be of gold and red,
With bright silk curtains high;
I’d wear a crown upon my head,
To dazzle every eye.

“And there I’d sit, in times of peace;
If any daring foe
Should try my power to decrease,
I’d lay the rascal low.

“I’d have a train of courtiers tall,
When I went out to ride,
To win a race, or leap a wall,—
Go pacing by my side.

“O! it would be such jolly fun,
To make them wait on me;
There, that is all; I think I’ve done;
A king like this I’d be!”

“I, too, would wish to be a king,”
His Father slowly said;
“But not to grace some glitt’ring ring,
With jewels round my head.

“And not in careless pomp to ride,
While grim and weary men
Breathed curses through my kingdom wide,
Then looked, and cursed again.

“No splendid palace would I rear;
No courtiers would I own;
To whisper flatt’ries in my ear,
And drown the poor man’s groan.

“No soldiers for the battle-field,
That I might rule in state;
No cannon’s peal, nor helm, nor shield;
No horses at my gate;

“Yet I would be the glorious king,
That you, my son, may be;
To fight and conquer every thing,
So all your power may see.

“I would be one whose crown is made
Of virtues, rare and bright;
That glow the same in sun or shade,
In their celestial light.

“A king, who holds in deepest scorn
All mean and selfish pride;
To whom all stricken ones who mourn,
Walk equals by his side.

“Who says to Passion, ‘Stand aside;
Thou art my deadliest foe;
With devils art thou still allied,
Though all should answer no!’

“A king, who lets the idle speech
Of flatterers pass him by,
And dwells above their utmost reach,
In aims made pure and high.

“A king, whose palace is a heart
That takes the whole world in;
True thoughts and tender make his court;
God’s poor may enter in.

“A king, who makes the outcast’s wrong,
In very deed, his own;
So truly rich, so brave, so strong,
God shields him on his throne.

“A king like this,—a noble king,—
I pray my son may be;
To bless the land whence still shall spring
The grandest Liberty!”

THE OLD MAGPIE.

SUCH a beautiful grove, where the trees grand
and high,
Seemed ladders of greenery to climb to the sky;
And beneath them were flowers so sweet and so
rare,
The bees lingered long, if they chanced to stop
there;
And the gravel walks shone in the light of the sun,
Where dear little children would frequently run;
And they glanced at the trees, looking up from
their play,
Imagining the warblers were happy as they.

There were dozens of birds in the trees overhead,
And at first, in no stories I ever have read,
Was more friendship and love shown. If some
nestling died,
It was really affecting to see how they cried;
And when a young family broke through the shell,
Their odd, fussy visits were funny to tell.
There was such a variety. Some were so plain;
Drab color all over, without speck or stain;
And others, with plumage so shining and gay,
That they dazzled your eyes as they fluttered away.

And their characters varied in equal degree.
There were some very talkative, witty, and free ;
While others were shy, and could never speak out,
What in their small heads they were thinking
about,
While they silently gazed at the beautiful trees
That shone in the sunlight, and swayed in the
breeze ;
And some pert ones whispered, they “never
could see
Any fun in thus staring straight into a tree !”

Among those I mentioned as being so shy,
And looking so long at the trees and the sky,
Was a dear little poet. Now, children, don't
smile,
And suppose I am telling you fibs all the while !
I am sure, by his manner,—that glance of his
eye,—
That he wrote lovely verses when no one was by.
And I really do think he had some little place,
That he furnished himself with both cheapness and
grace,
Where he wrote very fast, with a twig for a pen ;
And very much better than tall, silly men
I know of, that haven't his sweet, modest grace :
He wouldn't come flaunting his rhymes in your
face !

There was one all the rest thought a very great
wit;

One little bird laughed himself into a fit
At such funny rejoinders; and down he fell
plump

Into some stranger's nest! How he made them
all jump!

Then one was a traveller, who, once every year,
Flew his thousands of miles. It was not very
clear

Where he really had been; but such hair-breadth
escapes,

As the ship sharply rounded invisible capes;
And when quite rejoicing, he took to his wings,
He saw such unheard of, improbable things,
That one day, a young skeptic, that perched on
the tree,

The rest all attentive, as list'ners could be,
Said, "What a remarkably curious lie!"
But the rest quite subdued him by chirping "O,
fie!"

Then one was a genius,—at least so he said,—
And he prided himself on the shape of his head.
He really did nothing but nothing at all,
While he thought all the powers of the rest very
small;

Then his voice was quite cracked, tho' he thought
he could sing,

Which really did seem a ridiculous thing;
But they very good-naturedly gave him a place,
And never were known to laugh out in his face.

There were some always ready to wait on the rest,
And the other birds certainly loved these the best;
There were some that were chatterers, and not
very real,

Saying oftentimes more than they really did feel;
But each found some friends, and was courteous
to each—

A height that I trust we may all of us reach.

But, one day came a Magpie; he rented a tree
Where the birds rarely flew,—rather shabby to
see,—

For the lightning had struck it one terrible night,
When two nestlings were killed in their horrified
sight.

There, in a large crevice, he kept all his stores;
He had really no need of strong padlocks nor
doors;

For these birds were so honest; and what could
they do,

If he gave them the things that would sometimes
peep through

The trunk of the tree. Such a very odd mess
Would have been an annoyance, — a positive
distress !

But he thought them most costly, these treasured-
up things ;

They were nondescript, very — half scissors and
rings,

And shreds of old rags. Well, I never have heard
Of such curious stuff to belong to a bird !

There he lived by himself, but he often went out
When the birds were all chirping and flying about ;
And he seemed to know everything ; just what to
say ;

Then he had, when he spoke, such an affable
way,

That his influence was great, and the birds thought
him wise,

For his very sweet flatteries soon blinded their
eyes.

He was friendly towards all, and he talked a good
deal,

While he seemed for the welfare of others to
feel ;

And he learned all their secrets. Now, how it
was done,

I cannot imagine ! I know there was none

That could seem more delighted, more anxious
than he,
That the birds in the pleasantest ways should
agree;
But somehow it happened, whenever he came,
That the ones that he talked to were not quite the
same.

They thought they had suffered unmerited wrong,
And their love towards their friends grew less open
and strong.
Then they turned so suspicious, these once guile-
less birds;
The sweet milk of kindness soon soured to curds.
Then they grew so sarcastic; the rest in a huff,
Said *they* wouldn't stand such ridiculous stuff;
They heard something once that they wished they
might tell,
But they couldn't speak out,—which, perhaps, was
as well.

The Magpie seemed sorry they could not agree;
There was never a bird so condoling as he;
But, somehow, the jarring grew worse every day.
The Poet-bird said he no longer could stay;
He would seek some new haven of love and of
peace,
Till this bitter contention and sarcasm should
cease.

Then one of the shy ones said he would go, too,
And one very bright morning away they both
flew;
But they stopped on the top of the high shaded
wall,
To sing a good-bye to their friends, one and all.

The Poet began, when his friend touched his
wing,
“It really does seem a contemptible thing
To listen in secret; but, as for this bird,—
This Magpie,—I know he don’t utter a word
That isn’t a falsehood! Let’s hear what he says.
He’ll be caught, that I know, in his treacherous
ways.
I’ve had my eye on him; I’d like to find out
What the smiling old miscreant is chattering
about.”

Now the Poet-bird couldn’t well chide his dear
friend,
But he hopped in great haste to the wall’s furthest
end;
The other stood under the tall, blasted tree,
Where some friend of the Magpie then happened
to be.

“I’ve so much to tell you; I’m having such fun!
You wouldn’t believe all the mischief I’ve done.

When I came here, these birds talked of friendship, and such,
But I stirred them all up; gave the finishing touch;
And from loving each other, they wrangle like men!
If they stop, I say something,—they're at it again!
It's really amusing to hear them complain
Each one of the other! They all are so vain,
When I flatter them up, they bow down to my will;
Each thinks me his friend and best counsellor still!"

Here the breeze shook the tree, and he lost all the rest.

"Hist! hist! I am going straight back to the nest.

I have something to tell to our quarrelsome birds;
Come, help me to carry these very odd words."

So they stopped at each tree in succession, and told

What was said by the Magpie, so slanderous and bold.

Such a scene, when the Shy One had gone all around.

The little birds flew from the trees to the ground;

Then back to their nests! Such comparing of
notes!

I am sure the next day they had very sore throats.

There were looks of repentance; friend flew up to
friend;

The long reign of suspicion had come to an end.
Such murmurings of shame for ridiculous things;
Such caressing and sorrow, and flutt'ring of wings;
Such indignant, low chirpings against the mean
bird

That had caused all their follies, you never have
heard!

One said he would tear the base Magpie to shreds.
Some proposed a small cannon, well shotted with
leads,

Should be purchased, and placed just below on the
walk,

So, when next the old knave, with his treacherous
talk,

Should fly from his tree, they might riddle him
well;

Then, while he was dying, *their* tale they would
tell.

But the Shy One they used to consider so dumb,
Said, "Friends, this is nonsense! I hope you will
come

To look with clear eyes at the facts of the case.
It is true that the Magpie is treacherous and base,
But we all have, most certainly, been in the wrong!
Now, if birds were as loving, and patient, and
strong,

As I think we *may* be, this old Magpie might fly,
With no one to heed a mean scandal or lie.
If you take my advice, you will bid him decamp;
Small punishment this for the tattling old scamp;
But, on this bright day of reunion and love,
I think a right spirit in you it would prove."

The birds thought a moment, and said he was right;
To kill him, would only show anger and spite.
So they flew in a body, and covered the tree
Where the Magpie was perched up, as gay as could
be.

And the Shy One as spokesman, sang out very
clear,

And the bird, all amazement, soon trembled with
fear;

For the rest looked so wrathful, he didn't dare
move,

And his innocence, really, he couldn't well prove.
So he sat till the Shy One had shown his great sin,
And then all the others in concert begin.

Each one can recount some particular crime;
And all of them chatt'ring so hoarse at one time,

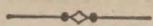
The Shy One says, "Just indignation speaks loud;
Sir Magpie, you'd better get out of this crowd
While yet you are safe. Go, and never come back;
For, when birds are excited, all prudence they
lack."

So he suddenly flew, while small twigs and loud
jeers

Flew violently round the old hypocrite's ears.

Then the birds, cooling off, sang a very glad song,
And resolved to grow loving, and patient, and
strong;

And now they are living in Friendship and Peace,
It is time that my rather long story should cease.



CHARLEY'S SISTER.

HER little chair drawn close beside
Her weeping Mother's knee,
She said, "Since little Charley died
You do not care for me!

"You kiss me, then you cry again,
And quickly turn away.
It gives you only bitter pain,
And so I dare not stay.

"I too feel very, very sad;
I wish the truth I knew.
They say he lives with angels fair;
I don't believe it's true!

"If he were really happy there,
You would not always cry.
It is so hard my brother dear
In the dark grave should lie!

"At night I wake and shuddering say,
For him it's darker still.
It seems so fearful; no more day
Under that dreadful hill!

"Why couldn't little Charley stay?
We always loved him so!
God acted in a wicked way,
To make my brother go!"

"Dear child," the startled Mother said,
"He is an angel fair.
Your darling brother is not dead;
God took him to his care.

He loved him more than you or I,
And gently led him home.
Through sunset gates in yonder sky,
He passed no more to roam.

“To Charley’s home we too shall go,
If we are good and true.
God watches o’er us here below,
Is always guarding you.

“And when she wakens in the night,
My little girl must say,
‘Father, Thy love sheds heavenly light;
For deeper Faith I pray.

‘This darkness cannot drive away
Thy tender care for me.
I feel at last some cloudless day
My Brother I will see.’

“Oh, little daughter! God is kind;
He left you to my care;
And if this heart seemed cold and blind,
He read the anguish there.

“The place where little Charley lay,
We’ll set with fairest flowers,
That there the humming-birds may stay—
A garden like to ours.

“We will no longer grieve and cry;
My little girl shall be
A loving friend that’s always nigh,
To keep me company.”

SHIPS AT SEA.

TWO stood talking in the street;
One was tall, with voice so sweet
That the boy instinctive stopped;
Thus he heard the words that dropped:

“So I said I’d vouch to you,
That the tale he told was true;
Each one gave a helping mite.”
Here a face as dark as Night,
Fixed his gaze. The stranger’s flush
Met the list’ner’s answering blush.

“When my ships come home from Sea,
I may give in charity.”
So much did the list’ner hear,
While he marked the covert sneer
On that face so hard and cold;
And he wondered if the gold
He might heap would bring a smile
Into eyes that looked the while.
There no generous thought had place;
And the boy, with slower pace,
Sought his home, where from his book
One looked up with kindest look,
Welcoming his little son:—
“Well, my boy! are lessons done?”

“Sober looks! No face for play!
What has wrought such change to-day?”
Then he drew him to his knee.
“Tell me what your thought may be!”

“Father, where are Uncle’s ships?”
Smiles play ’round his hearer’s lips,
Yet he heaves a stifled sigh,
Ere he speaks in low reply:—

“Ships I fear he’ll never see,
Wrecked upon a wintry sea;
Stranded under darkened skies,
Whence no gleams of Morning rise!
Where these ships I cannot guess;
But the power to cheer and bless,
Does not lie in hoards of gold;
Love is wealth—its weight untold!—

“Part in God’s all won’drous plan,
Soon my son will be a man.
With a heart-glow deep and true,
Strive a brother’s part to do.
Keep that heart an open door
To the sorrows of the poor;
Offer service true and free,
Waiting not for ships at sea.

“Let kind deeds like incense rise
In a glad self-sacrifice;

Keep your eyes on things above;
Set your heart in thoughts of love;
Give your mite, whate'er it be;
Never wait for ships at sea!"

THE BEE AND THE FLY.

A LITTLE Bee chanced to buzz close to a flower,
Where a Fly had been lazily dozing an hour,
Just under the rose-leaves—the place was so cool;
And ease, you must know, was the little Fly's rule.
He seemed old enough to take care of himself,
And a morsel of food to lay up on the shelf,
In case there occurred any sudden mishap;
But there he was snoring, and taking a nap,
And dreaming some nonsense, the lazy young
thing;

The sudden noise waked him; he lifted one wing,
Then dropped it again—thought the Bee a great
bore—

And settled himself for a sleep, as before.

But the Bee came so close, as the honey he took,
That he sat up despairing, to take a good look.
The other one worked like a diligent Bee,
As the Fly 'neath the rose-leaves could readily see.

“Oh, what a great dunce!” so at length he broke out.

“If I were as you are, so clumsy and stout,
I might buzz near the hive, or a very short walk,
Perhaps take for a visit, and neighborly talk.
But to go such a distance, and work in this heat!
I’m really quite thankful I find things to eat
Without such hard labor;—I fly, if I please;
If I don’t, I may slumber or crawl at my ease.
While you, just to look at you, makes me feel tired!
To work in that manner, I could not be hired!”

The Bee stopped a moment and looked at the Fly;
“Excuse me for buzzing when you were close by,
But you know it’s a habit I have at all times.
That can never be numbered as one of your crimes,
Since you scarce ever budge! To be candid, my
dear,

I feel much like pulling your very small ear.
You’re impertinent—very, but soon you’ll find out,
I but show common prudence in buzzing about.
Good morning, you little luxurious Fly!
I fear you’ll repent when your chance has gone by.”
He buzzed and was gone, to look up a new flower,
And get home in good time to escape from a shower.
The little Fly smiled, with his head in his wing,
And said, “How I pity him—stupid old thing.”

The Summer was gone; in the depths of his hive
The Bee was well fed, and continued to thrive;

But the poor little Fly was quite chilled through
and through.

Where could he find provender, what should he do!
He tried at the window, but folks didn't care
For the poor little Fly that was shivering there.
And he crawled on the pane in a very sad way:
"I suppose I must go without dinner to-day:
I'm so numbed I can't fly if I tried ever so.
I hated all effort—I thought it so low!
But now when I think of the clumsy old Bee,
I envy his lot, and my folly I see.
I thought all the year under rose-leaves to lie,
But the cold spell is coming, and now I must die!"



"ONLY A JOKE!"

THEY stopped for a rest from the heat of the sun,
'Neath the shade of the tree; all their lessons
were done

For the rest of the day. You could tell by their
looks,

The four were well pleased to throw all their books
On the grass, where wild flowers so tender and fair,
Gave lessons of wisdom to all who stopped there.
But the boys didn't care for such teachers as these;
They liked better to run and to shout at their ease.

"Ho! ho! we can have a most excellent joke! Here crawls that Will Evans—he's such a real poke! He isn't near up to the terrible wood; Now, listen, quick, boys, for the story's so good!

"He is nervous, you know, though he looks rather bright.

I just met him one day I was flying my kite,
And he asked me to go with him past that dark wood,
But I laughed in his face—for the thing was so good!

"He's such a great coward! I know he would run. Let's frighten him well—it will be such good fun! We can hide in the bushes—I'll give a loud cry, And jump suddenly up;—you will see how he'll fly!"

So the boys scrambled down by a path which they knew,
And hid near the bushes the child must pass through.

He was younger than they, and had very bright eyes,
But they seemed to look out for unpleasant surprise;
And he walked there alone at a very brisk pace,
As the boughs of the wood threw their shade on his face,

While he carried his books with a very close grip,
As if in his trembling the satchel might slip.

As he came near the bushes he heard a wild sound,
 And the boy, without stopping at all to glance
 round,
 Rushed on through the wood like a startled young
 deer,
 And out in broad sunshine. The deep creek was
 near,
 But the desperate boy, too much hurried for care,
 Wild shouting behind him, and dark shadows there,
 Dashed over the bridge, then the boys saw him fall!
 This sight, you may judge, sadly sobered them all.

 They were not far behind, and they ran to the bank;
 One plunged where the struggling boy rapidly sank,
 And bore in his strong arms the delicate child,
 Whose features distorted, were ghastly and wild;
 And they rubbed him, with faces as white as his
 own,
 Till the boy breathed again, as he gave a low moan.
 Then they carried him into a house that was near,
 With remorse for the fun which had cost him so
 dear,
 And his Mother came weeping, to watch by her
 child,
 Who always looked up, when their eyes met, and
 smiled;
 But he knew her no longer! All through that dark
 night
 His brain wandered back to the scene of his fright,

And he lived it all over—the terror—the pain—
And they feared all their watching and waiting
were vain.

For days he lay tossing in fever so high,
He saw not his friends, nor the sunshine, nor sky;
But at last, pale and thin, with a pitiful smile,
Towards his Mother who watched him that long,
dreary while,
Her darling breathed freely, and reason awoke;
The boys meant no harm—it was “only a joke!”



THE GREEDY MOUSE.

A LITTLE Mouse lived in a hole near the shelf,
Where the pick of the pantry he had to
himself.

There nibbling he stayed, and they never found out
What the little, luxurious thief was about.

So he ate of all good things; the least little sound
Would make him jump into his hole at one bound,
Where he listened till all things were quiet once
more,

When he came out to scamper and eat as before.

The days passed away ; he was thin when he came,
But he grew fat as butter, and thought it a shame
If they didn't bring in some rich pudding each
 night,
That before going to bed he might have a good
 bite.

He no longer could scamper—he walked on the
 shelf—

He considered it his, the impertinent elf;
And peeped o'er the edge, with an impudent look,
As some very nice relish he daintily took.
He was not more greedy than children I've seen,
But I hope there are none so contemptibly mean,
For now I must tell you of one little fact,
Revealing how badly this young Mouse could act.

One day as he leaned 'gainst a bag-full of rice,
Still nibbling at something remarkably nice,
He suddenly pricked up one delicate ear:—
“What can be that very odd noise that I hear!
It sounds like a Mouse gnawing back of the shelf;
I'll very soon show him that none but myself
Has a right to be here, and I'll speak out so plain
That the impudent fellow won't dare to remain.
It's very annoying!—the whole hungry crew
Will follow him soon if he once can get through,
And see my rich fare, and report to the rest,
Where they are half-starving, I feed on the best!”

The little Mouse waited, impatient and grim;
He felt the intrusion an insult to him,
And trembled with rage, when a Mouse weak and
 thin,
But bowing and scraping, crept timidly in.

“Good morning, your worship! I wouldn’t in-
 trude,
But I’m so very hungry; this place smelt so
 good
When I stopped at a crack in the corner up
 there.

But bless me! why, neighbor, I really declare,
I didn’t remember! you’re growing so plump!
Just think how we two used to scamper and jump
In that dingy old loft—when our Mothers would
 cry:

‘You’ll hurt yourselves, darlings! don’t caper so
 high!’

“I have no recollection of times so remote,”
Said the other, a gurgle of rage in his throat,—
“To speak plain, I don’t know you! Go! say not
 a word,
And take yourself off ere your voice can be
 heard.
Some friend may drop in! Do you hear what I
 say?
Go! take yourself instantly out of the way!”

So saying, he gave him a push towards the crack;
The other one roused, gave his lordship one back,
When at the weak Mouse like a tiger he flew,
Intending to beat, and to bite him well, too.
Just then, as it happened, a house-maid came in,
And fright nearly made her jump out of her skin,
When she saw the two mice; and she turned, with
a scream,
Too much frightened to punish, it really would
seem;
But ere she ran—wildly, but surely, she threw,
Caught off from her foot, a distressed looking
shoe.

The hungry Mouse dodged, and escaped to his
crack,
So frightened, he never once turned to look back.
The other one tried to get out of the way,
As he saw the shoe come that unfortunate day;
But it struck him so hard, so decided a blow,
That just in one second his pride was laid low.
He was stiff as a post, on the shelf where he fed—
The greedy and mean little Mouse lay there dead.

THE COUSINS.

“MY dears,” said a Dog to her Puppies one day,

“I wish you would take yourselves out of the way;
You make so much noise in your frisking and fun,
I dreamed that the end of the world had begun!
I wish, for an hour, you three would go out,
And give me some comfort by rambling about.”
And the Pups give assent with a kick of their heels;
You may know how delighted the poor Mother feels.

One after another they trotted along,—
The three little Puppies,—so jolly and strong.
“Suppose we go see if our Cousin has come,”
Said the eldest: “How glad he must be to get
home,
And roll on the grass, and be quite at his ease;
In the city, I hear, they can’t do as they please,
But must sit up at windows, so solemn and prim,
Without even barking, or moving a limb;
And if, for one moment, they run in the street,
The sausage-man chops them straight up into
meat;

Which isn't so pleasant, and really don't pay,
Whatever the dandified town-pups may say."

"Is that true!" said the second: "How dreadful
it sounds!"

And he gave, as he said it, two kicks, and three
bounds,

To prove to himself he was quite well content
To know that his days in the country were spent.
While the third little Pup thought it quite a good
joke,

And gave, with a grin, an incredulous poke.

So, chatting and frisking, the distance was past,
And they reached the frame-house of their Cousin
at last.

They ran through the yard with obstreperous
glee,

But no sign of life could the Puppy-Dogs see.

Their Cousin was famous for chasing the rats;
Indeed, in this work he excelled all the cats
His master had had for a number of years;
He made for their necks, never hampered by
fears;

And being remarkably active and strong,
He hadn't occasion to trouble them long.
Such being the case, you may guess the surprise
Which the Puppy-Dogs felt when this sight met
their eyes!

The barn-door stood open; there lay some ripe
grain,
All black with great rats, and they saw just as
plain,
Their Cousin asleep 'neath the thresher beyond;
While fearless, indeed, I may say rather fond,
His enemies nibbled and frisked near his head;
The youngest pup thought he was certainly dead;
But the other two both heard him give a slight
snore,
As they stood staring in at the half-opened door.

“O, Cousin! the place is all swarming with rats;”
“I leave such small game to their equals, the cats,”
He said, half awake; then he opened his eyes
And looked round the barn with no sign of sur-
prise.

And, would you believe it, the rats didn't run!
One stopped, in the midst of his frisking and fun,
To wink at the dog,—once his bitterest foe,—
Which looked very funny, although it was low.

He rose, and quite daintily put out his paw,
And then a great change his young relatives saw.
He used to be slender, in fact, rather thin;
But now he rejoiced in a great double chin;
While his eyes, once so keen, were embedded in
fat,
And he hated all work, you could plainly see that.

"Walk in and get rested. I find it a bore
 To run as I foolishly used to before!
 I've learned this true wisdom,—to live at my ease,
 And to sleep half the time, and do just as I please.
 I never will trouble a rat or a mouse;
 I rarely come in here, but lounge near the house;
 And Cook knows my relish for delicate bits;
 She makes, in her business, some capital hits;
 And I live like a gentleman; labor is low;
 If my master complains I will soon tell him so.
 My friends in the city had fashion and taste,
 And I grew sympathetic, so happily placed;
 To their view of the question I quickly inclined;
 All work is destructive to body and mind;
 All motion is wearisome,—vulgar, indeed,
 (Just look at those quizzical rats how they feed!")

The Pups stood bewildered: it seemed very plain
 It would look rather stupid for them to remain.
 This Cousin was new, and would think it a bore
 To romp or to chatter with them as before;
 So the eldest one said it was nearly tea-time,
 And their Mother would think it a very great
 crime
 If they didn't come home ere she spread out the
 bones.
 "O, pshaw! what a meal! I'd as leave eat the
 stones

That lie in the lane ; but each one to his taste ;
I feed on the best, and I revel in waste.

“My mother, indeed, sheds abundance of tears,
(A stupid proceeding for one of her years ;)
She is vulgar, poor thing, and would have me plod
through

The ridiculous work that I once used to do.
She talks about earning the food that I eat,
(That impudent rat ran just under my feet,)
I hate such suggestions ! with fashion and wit,
I feel sure that in time I will make a great hit.
My regards to my Aunt ; don't forget to stop in ;”
Here his voice was quite lost in the folds of his
chin,

And he looked towards the thrasher, as much as
to say,

“I really am wasting the whole of the day.”

So the Puppies, abashed by the airs he had got,
Set off for their home at a soberer trot ;
Concluding, however, they never would be,
If they could, such a silly young dandy as he.

THE END.

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